

EDAD 639 – Administrative Practicum
Chadron State College
Reflection #4
Kellen Conroy
February 28, 2015

Administrative Log: February 2015

Documented Learning Experiences:

1. Mentor Job Shadowing – Angie Guenther & Margaret Sandoz, Niobrara Public Schools.
2. Pender PTO Meetings/Activities

Addressed ISLLC Standard:

Standard #4: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

Standard Indicators:

1. Identify community agencies and organizations that would be interested in partnership activities with the school; make initial contact with the groups' leaders to determine their interest in working with the school.
2. Attend, facilitate, and participate in PTA/PTO and Booster Club meeting.

Mentor Job Shadowing

Mrs. Margaret Sandoz & Mrs. Angie Guenther – Niobrara Public Schools
February 11, 2015

I am very fortunate and honored to be able to visit, support, and learn from many different schools and work with many different teachers and administrators as an employee of an Educational Service Unit in the state of Nebraska. Throughout my time at ESU #1 I have had many positive learning opportunities, chances to provide professional development, and opportunities for educational/personal growth. The opportunities that I have had due to the nature of my work in education have had a direct impact on and relation to the continuance of my education at Chadron State College.

To further my understanding of the school setting and the nature of instructional leadership/building management, I set up a job shadowing experience with two of my mentors, Mrs. Margaret Sandoz (Superintendent/Elem. Principal) and Mrs. Angie Guenther (7-12 Principal) of Niobrara Public Schools. Throughout the day with Mrs. Sandoz and Mrs. Guenther, I was able to have professional conversations, experience day-to-day building management, and witness instructional leadership at its best. The following is an account of the valuable learning experiences that I was honored to have with Mrs. Sandoz and Mrs. Guenther.

Focus of Shadowing: Day – Day Administrative Operations

Beginning of School/Opening – Mrs. Sandoz:

- Mrs. Sandoz began the day by greeting the students and staff with a “good morning” and a smile on her face as they entered the building. It is true that actions speak louder than words, and the actions of Mrs. Sandoz clearly community that she cherishes relationships with her students and staff. Fostering and promoting healthy learning relationships is vital to a healthy school culture and it is evident that a positive and welcoming school culture has been created and sustained in this school district.
- After Mrs. Sandoz has checked with students and staff, she then checks in with the office and if there is anything in need of her immediate attention in the morning.
- When I was in the classroom I remember getting messages or calls stating that Music, P.E., or Guidance class would not take place that day. I was able to see that decision making process first-hand. After a conversation with a teacher, in which I excused myself from, Mrs. Sandoz and I walked to classrooms to notify the teachers of the change in the schedule. Due to construction of their new school, they do not have intercoms fully functional in all of the classrooms yet.

Updates/Projects:

- During my time with Mrs. Sandoz a couple different projects/tasks were shared with me that she had started to complete. The first project was in reference to a meeting that was held on a previous day relating to multidisciplinary teams and the RTI process. Another project that we discussed was the upcoming NCLB Monitoring Visit. Mrs. Sandoz shared the

information and walked me through the process she will take in completing the required components necessary prior to the visit. A third project that Mrs. Sandoz shared was in relation to Impact Aid and the process of applying for the funds.

Duties:

- While working with Mrs. Sandoz, administrative duties were shared and demonstrated. Duties relating to updating school board documents from the previous meeting, filing/organizing substitute and leave forms for staff, and observing classrooms to ensure effective teaching/learning and school safety were tasks that were very clearly explained and demonstrated.
- In the afternoon, while working with Mrs. Angie Guenther, we discussed the enrollment process of students to the school system. Mrs. Guenther highlighted items that must be completed prior to a new student enrollment. We also had the opportunity to discuss the duties related to when a student leaves the schools and enrolls in another educational setting.

Meetings:

- I was granted permission to sit in on a meeting that had been scheduled for Mrs. Sandoz for the morning. Due to FERPA regulations, I will not be able to discuss the content of the meeting. Sitting in on the meeting was a great learning experience and it demonstrated how educational professionals and families can work as a team to accomplish goals.

Visits:

- Niobrara is currently in the process of completing the construction of a new addition to their school. The existing elementary building has been renovated and will soon be connected to the new middle/high school section. I had the opportunity to get a tour of the new facilities with Mrs. Sandoz. Both the teachers and the students are getting excited about the new facilities and being able to use them prior to the end of the school year. The new addition will be great for instruction, performances, competitions, and provide the community another means of collaboration as well.
- Mrs. Sandoz strives to visit classrooms and demonstrate positive instructional leadership. We visited elementary classrooms and we were able to visit the preschool, which is located off-site.
- In the afternoon, I had the chance to work with Mrs. Angie Guenther. During the day, many of the students were absent due to Industrial Tech Day at another location. Mrs. Guenther and I visited the classrooms throughout the buildings, spoke with teachers and students, and observed the teaching/learning that was happening in each of the classrooms.

Professional Conversations:

- One of the items that I truly appreciated during my shadowing experience was in relation to the professional conversations that I was able to have with Mrs. Sandoz and Mrs. Guenther. Each made time in their day and schedules to answer my questions and have conversations related to their tasks, duties, and things to think about/consider as an administrator.
- The professional conversations that one can have with a practicing administrator is where I believe, real learning takes place. I think back to my days in the teacher preparation program and how I was prepared to complete management plans, unit plans, assessments, etc. When I stepped into student teaching and in my first classroom that is where the learning took place. I often thought, "I wish someone would have shared this" or "When was that discussed?" Having professional conversations with practicing administrators helps one to gain more knowledge and insight into the real world of school leadership and administration.

Mrs. Margaret Sandoz and Mrs. Angie Guenther are exceptional instructional leaders and building managers. They each set a positive example for their students, staff, and community. It is easy for one to tell that a culture of collaboration, learning, and high standards has been established and fostered for the students and staff at Niobrara Public Schools. It has been an honor, privilege, and great learning opportunity to have the chance to work with Mrs. Sandoz and Mrs. Guenther not only in this shadowing experience, but also throughout the course and my time at ESU #1.

Pender PTO
Reflection of Leadership and Organization

"Good relations are not an accident; they are planned" (Hoyle, English, & Steffy, 1998 pg.42). Developing a school and community collaborative relationship takes a tremendous amount of planning, communication, and effort. I was scheduled to attend and facilitate February's Pender Parent- Teacher Organization (PTO) meeting, but due to my son being in the hospital for an illness, I was unable to

do so. Instead, I would like to share my reflections and experiences related to my involvement in the Pender PTO.

As a parent of two students in the school system in which I received my education from brings a sense of pride and community. In addition, having the opportunity to be a leader in the development of a school – community organization has provided many learning experiences and chances to provide support for the students and staff of the school.

At the beginning of the school year I was provided with the opportunity to attend an initial planning meeting for a PTO that would serve students and staff of Pender Public Schools. I was not sure what to expect, but as a former classroom teacher and now parent of two elementary students, I found this to be a great opportunity to support both the school and community. The initial PTO meeting was held in September of 2014 and throughout the meeting we discussed the vision, mission, and organization of the group. In addition to those items discussed, we also selected representatives to serve as president, vice president, treasurer and secretary for the Pender PTO. I had and continue to have, the honor of serving as Co-President of the Pender PTO. This has been a fantastic leadership experience and has provided many insights to working collaboratively with school and community representatives. Being selected a leader in this group has been and continues to be a great experience for me. Part of my responsibilities to the group as Co-President includes managing the membership documentation, creating meeting agendas with the input from others, managing our Google account, facilitating meetings, and providing any additional help and support that is needed.

The Pender PTO has reached out and extended an invitation to the Booster Club in the form of creating a collaborative partnership and relationship. In the town of our size, having two groups with the same general vision, mission, and membership roster, the leaders of the PTO sought to unite forces for the good of the school and community. This has been a very interesting conversation and effort. The union of the PTO and Boosters has really demonstrated the need for leadership to model effective communication skills, problem solving, and facilitation. The creation of one group has taken a tremendous amount of work, but all of the stresses and efforts will be worth it. Operating from a common perspective will allow the group to provide resources and meaningful opportunities for students, staff, and community members. Hackman et.al (2002) state, "Working collaboratively, the school, families, and community members can select effective involvement practices that are aligned with the school's goals, then collectively identify expected results for students, teachers, and parents" (pg. 132).

Even though there were more learning opportunities present during the month of February, I believe that my job shadowing experience and the PTO reflections strongly support ISLLC Standard 4 and have provided me tools needed to model effective leadership. I look forward to continuing my journey of learning and practicing effective and meaningful educational leadership.

References:

- Hackmann, D.G., Schmitt-Oliver, D.M., & Tracy, J.C. (2002). *The standards-based administrative internship*. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc.
- Hoyle, J.R. English, F.W., & Steffy, B.E. (1998). *Skills for successful 21st century school leaders: Standards for peak performers*. Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators.